

Representative Rodney Davis (IL-13)
House Committee on Natural Resources
Members' Day Hearing on H.R. 1225
Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act

Thank you Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, and Members of the Natural Resources Committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today. I am here in support of H.R. 1225, the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act.

I represent the 13th district of Illinois, which includes part of the district Abraham Lincoln represented in Congress as well his home and resting place in Springfield, Illinois. The Lincoln Home is a National Parks site that is a treasured historical site and tourist attraction, and I want to ensure that visitors are able to enjoy it for years to come. Unfortunately, my district has \$6.39 million in deferred maintenance projects, and the State of Illinois has roughly \$19.64 million in deferred maintenance; this is an issue that we must address before the numbers get even worse.

This is not a Republican or Democrat issue, this is a value issue. It is our responsibility to be good stewards of the land we already own. This is not a permanent program, rather a 5 year down payment to address our most urgent and needed maintenance issues across the Parks system. We owe it to our constituents and those who travel far distances, to see sites like the Lincoln Home, to carry this out.

Our National Parks are a wise investment, with a return on investment of nearly \$10 for every dollar invested. These dollars support over 300,000 jobs and contribute \$36 billion in economic activity annually. It's a shame that we would even consider letting these sites decline further. It will cost us more money later on if we put off critical maintenance, and unless we act to fix this now, the backlog will only get worse.

It's our duty to preserve the many historic sites across our nation. I'm consistently inspired by President Lincoln's legacy of leadership, and his ability to unite, rather than divide, and I strive to emulate those qualities every day as a Member of Congress. Given the economic benefits and continued high visitation rates to our national parks, I request that the Committee swiftly move this legislation to restore our National Parks.